



Stanley Brezenoff, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, right, testifies at House subcommittee hearing on World Trade Center bombing. At left is New York City Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly.

BY KEITH JENKINS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Bomb Suspects' Ties to Inmate Probed

Salameh, Elgabrownny Remain Chief Focus of N.Y. Investigation

By William Sposato
Reuter

NEW YORK, March 9—The investigation into the bombing of the World Trade Center is focusing more closely on the two men already charged in the case and their ties to a prisoner who was jailed on charges stemming from the 1990 killing of Rabbi Meir Kahane, investigators and news reports said today.

Mohammed A. Salameh is charged with taking part in the Feb. 26 bombing that killed five people and injured more than 1,000. He rented the van believed used to deliver the bomb to the underground garage of the lower Manhattan landmark.

Ibrahim Elgabrownny, arrested for scuffling with authorities as they searched his apartment, also has been called a suspect in the case by prosecutors.

The two are known to have ties to Sayyid A. Nosair, who is in prison on charges stemming from the killing of Kahane in New York. Nosair was convicted of gun possession and assault in the case, but cleared of murder charges.

The New York Times reported today that Salameh and Elgabrownny are now thought to be pivotal figures in the case.

In Washington, FBI Director William S. Sessions said today that the bombing should not be seen as an indication of a coming wave of terrorist acts.

The American public should always be vigilant, but this suspected act of terrorism should not be so viewed as a coming wave of terror, Sessions told a House hearing looking into the blast.

New York Assemblyman Dov Hikind said today that

hane case that those responsible would be involved in other such acts.

Observers at Nosair's 1991 trial said that Salameh was among those who regularly attended and New York newspapers today showed pictures of Nosair with someone who appeared to be Salameh.

Prison authorities said today that Nosair is part of the investigation, although his possible role was not disclosed.

According to news reports, Nosair's cell at Attica prison in upstate New York has been searched for any documents connected with the bombing.

Officials say Salameh and Elgabrownny have links to a fundamentalist Muslim group whose spiritual leader is Omar Abdul Rahman.

Abdul Rahman has said repeatedly that he had nothing to do with the bombing. "I do not condone nor do I incite such acts of violence," he said in a statement issued by his lawyer.

At the same time, investigators are also looking into whether the bombing involved Middle East terrorist groups.

James Fox, New York head of the FBI, told Reuter that he believed those responsible for the blast were part of an organized operation.

"They may just be an ad hoc group, but my gut feeling tells me it's not the case," Fox said in the interview. "We're looking pretty closely at a possible link between these guys and the old-line terrorist groups."

Fox also said he expects more searches for evidence this week and possibly more arrests.

At the site of the blast, workers today continued hauling out the tons of rubble around ground zero.